

The Cauthers' Story

The Cauthers' story in Canada begins with the arrival of Thomas Cauthers (1782-1859) from Enniskillen, County of Fermanagh, Ireland in 1822.

This was before the potato famine and it is thought that the allure was the prospect of available land. They were Irish Protestants and settled in Stanton, Ontario (Airport Rd. south of Mansfield). Land would be cleared for farming just west of Airport Rd. A pioneer cemetery close by contains the graves of many of the early settlers, including several Cauthers.

With one son Thomas and his wife Jane (Hand) having 12 children and another son Matthew and his wife Mary (Nixon) having 11 children, one can see how the genealogical chart quickly spread.

Our line of the family originates with Matthew (1805-1884), one of the farm owners & then to his son Nixon (1845-1905) who married Ann (Bradley) (1852-1945) and had 6 children.

We have now arrived in Stayner and some familiar names. One of Nixon's sons was James (Jim) Cauthers, my Grandfather. More about him & our immediate family later, but first a few words about Jim's siblings.

Aunt Mary Jane (known as Minnie) (1876-1959) married Thomas Dickey and gives us the connection to the Brown family initially through her daughter Jennie who married Charlie Rogers, and then to her daughter Ruth who married Allan Brown. Ruth & Allan and their children, Joan, Aldan, Pamela, and Anson were always close to our family and we had many a chicken BBQ at their farm (they raised thousands of broiler chickens).

A bit of trivia: In partnership with Allan (who had the needed land, farm equipment and grading station) I was able to finance university by growing 15 acres of cucumbers and selling them to Bicks Pickles. Allan had devised a very slow moving "picker". It had six seats (two per cucumber row) and you can imagine with me and five other women the conversation was not all business. I learned a lot over those summers (some of it useful). A second "picker" was added later. I believe there were about 20 local women to draw from. My mother, Mary, was always there to support me. Other names included Mary Holt, Lottie Davidson, Maude Nobes, Evelyn Braithwaite, Eleanor Black, and Marion Sharpe.

Jim's brother, Uncle John, (1886-1964) married Ada (Harmon) and lived in Collingwood. He had a grocery store on the main street & supplied many of the ships that would dock in the harbour.

Aunt Ann (Annie)(1880-1968) lived next door to my Grandparents on Weir Street (third house in from the corner of Weir & Scott St.). Her son Herman (1905-1990) married Mabel Milligan. They lived in Barrie. He was a lay preacher & I believe, more than once, addressed the Baptist congregation in Stayner. Out back of Aunt Annie's house was an interesting building used for woodworking by Henry Hollingshead, a local carpenter. Peeking through the windows we were fascinated by all the pulleys that activated his equipment . Annie later married Fred Pilkey.

Uncle William (Will) (1874-1942) married Jane (Watson), my Grandmother's sister, and lived on the corner house on the other side of my Grandparent's home. Later, Ted & Cora Finn (my mother's sister) lived in that house. The lawn between these two homes was a favourite playground for us kids. Will and Jane had a son, Clarence (1898-1947) who was the druggist at the IDA store on the south side of main street. He and his wife Bertha lived above the store with their daughter Lorraine. I understand

that in early days everyone went to the drug store to get their newspaper (no paper delivery back then). Both newspapers and mail came by train and in the early 1900's there would be up to 6 passenger trains a day on the Meaford to Toronto run. (Remember the wail of the steam locomotive on a foggy night?). A 9 pm arrival would bring the later editions of several newspapers. Early newspapers included Mail & Empire, Toronto Globe, Toronto Star and Toronto Telegram.

Uncle Andrew (Andy) Cauthers(1888-1955) married Mary (Beatrice) Sharpe. Uncle Andy was a barber who apparently first located in what was later Wheeler's Insurance office. I remember his shop across from the Funeral Home in the Pearson block (now Service Ontario). As I sat waiting for a hair cut I realized that a lot of the world's problems were solved in that small space. Andy was active in the Baptist Church.

And now to James (Jim) Cauthers, my Grandfather (1878-1958). Jim married Annie May Watson in December of 1901. They had 5 children, 2 of whom, Lloyd and Norman died young. Bill was born in 1902 and my father, Clinton, and Marie (twins) in 1914. Jim and Annie lived on Weir St., as I mentioned, almost directly behind Watson's Motors (at that time). I have warm memories of their home and its welcoming verandah. They had a chicken coop out back and my sister Carolyn & I would sometimes collect eggs. Carolyn remembers helping Grandma pluck chicken feathers. An attached shed & barn were crammed with what people today might call "treasures" - old license plates, tobacco tins, bits & pieces of furniture etc. Grandpa had his chair beside the kitchen stove & spent many hours there relaxing and smoking his pipe. He had a 1927 Essex automobile. I can remember going with him and Grandma to the blueberry plains at the bottom end of Wasaga Beach. Blueberries were "there for the picking". I can remember being concerned on one trip. It was raining & I guess early windshield wipers were in the development stage and not very effective. Grandpa would roll down his window and reach around to activate the wiper by hand – I guess we weren't travelling very fast. At one stage, Jim had a grocery store/ice cream parlour on Main Street (now Nifty Thrifty Shop) beside the Stayner Sun paper office. At the back of the store was an ice cream parlour with tables & chairs and my father, Clinton, recounted how on a Saturday night people would line up in the laneway (no longer there) between the store & the Gartland Building to get access to the parlour. Dad and Grandfather made their own ice cream. They would visit a local farm to get the necessary rich cream. The ice cream was made in a separate shed at the back of the store. Grandpa also ground his own coffee in the store. Pearl Woodard helped out in the store. Extra help was needed on a Saturday night. After he sold the store, Grandpa & Bob Allen painted homes and he also did some carpentry work. He was a volunteer Fireman. Dad remembers that if there was a fire at night you could hear Grandpa's boots heading down the hallway to the front door. The kids would be scared when they heard the siren & get into bed with Grandma. Fire equipment was a two wheel hose cart, the hose on a reel. It was kept at the fire hall & pulled by the Firemen. Later they would hang the hose from the top to the bottom of the bell tower to dry.

Grandma was the "stereotypical grandmother". Carolyn and I remember stopping in on the way home from school to be treated to brown sugar sandwiches and a glass of milk. This was before "meddling experts" told us what was bad for us. Jim & Annie were married for 55 years.

Their son, Bill Cauthers (1902-1981) who married Grace Love, lived mostly in Toronto, working in a sales capacity with Victoria Paper. In later years they moved with cousin Janet to Victoria, Vancouver Island for health reasons. Janet, who married Jack Lisman had a son Alex (Toronto) & a daughter, Amanda. Janet currently lives in Victoria B.C..

My father, Clinton(1914-2005) and my Aunt Marie(1914-1995) were twins. Marie married Roy Wall.

They lived in Stratford and had two children, Bill and Cathy. Roy was killed in a car accident in 1952 and for a period of time Marie, Bill and Cathy lived with Grandpa & Grandma Cauthers. Marie later remarried to Jack Walker & lived on a farm just south of town. Later they moved into town to John St. Bill worked in Toronto with Xerox for a number of years but returned to this area & married Rebecca (Becky) Bomsta. Together they owned a "We Care" franchise out of Barrie before retiring. They live in Nottawa.

Cathy married Jim Woolley, an Anglican Minister. Jim was the minister at The Church of the Good Shepherd for several years. Since then Cathy & Jim have lived and raised a family (two daughters Anne & Sarah) in Mississauga. Jim just recently retired from the Ministry.

My father attended Byng Public/ Stayner Continuation School. Not all serious I'm told. One year, at Halloween, kids brought Miss Ruson's cow into the school and left it there overnight.

In 1938, Dad married my mother Mary Partridge whom he had met on a blind date. Mom was raised on a farm in Sunnidale with sister Cora (Finn) and brother Johnny. There would be four children; Carolyn, myself, John (Jackie) and Connie. Early homes were rentals. The first home we lived in was on John St. Carolyn was born in this house and brought into the world by Dr. Murphy Sr. Dr. Murphy Jr. did the honours with me in his office/home on the corner building south of the Library. Jackie would later have Dr. Ray Ives & Connie, Dr. Bill Ives – we spread the business around.

Our second house was on Weir St. rented for the exorbitant sum of \$15.00/month – Dad was earning \$15.00/week – with the Clarence Wood family on one side and the Duncan Brown residence on the other. The Weir St. home would later burn down. Carolyn and I have wonderful memories of this time with Grandpa Jim, Grandmother Annie, Aunt Cora (Partridge) and Uncle Ted Finn and cousins June and Blain all living on the same street. One recollection I have growing up is of army vehicles from time to time parking along Weir St. The soldiers would take a lunch break from their military exercises and left over food would be offered and gratefully accepted. It was a time of Tasker Grant coal delivery (basement window) and Besse door to door milk delivery.

Our next house was the large brick home ("Davis house") at the east end of town beside the current Ultramar gas station. Finally, in 1953 we purchased our first (and last) home on the corner of Cherry & Charles St. for \$2,200.00. This is the home where Connie was raised. There was an attached shed at the back of the house which held coal, junk, and a "chemical" toilet which had to be emptied. The shed wasn't heated & had cracks in the walls. In the winter you really had to want "to go" (no time spent reading there). This later gave way to modern conveniences.

Memories include school concerts and movies in the Town Hall. The movie man would travel through Stayner periodically and show movies (usually interrupted by a projector breakdown). And, of course, "Teen Town" dancing on Saturday nights.

From 1936 – 1941 Dad worked at (Vern) Johnson's Men's Wear. It was here that he learned the tailoring trade. He left there to work at the Clyde during the war. The Clyde was located in Collingwood, & later became Kaufmann's Furniture – now an empty field. The Clyde made and assembled parts for mosquito fighter/ bombers, in particular the wheel cylinders which absorbed the jolt when the plane landed. Dad was there for about 4 years as an Inspector. Then, in partnership with Ted Finn, Modern Men's Wear was born and was a thriving business for many years. They started at the current "Perks" location and then moved across the street to the same location as Vern Johnson's store earlier. It later became Swanson's Men's Wear (now D-Vine Wine). Made to measure clothing – suits etc. from material samples was popular in those days. Adjustments to rack clothes were made out back. I remember Dad working with a tape measure around his neck and seated at a sewing machine at the

back of the store.

My mother, Mary, in addition to being a house keeper & raising children, was active in the Presbyterian Church – in the choir, in Willing Workers, in W.M.S. (Women's Missionary Society) & Ladies Aid. She & her sister Cora were long time members of the Horticultural Society and would enter floral displays at the annual flower show. Mom and Cora loved food (both were wonderful bakers) and up to the time of her death at age 91 in February 2007 she & Cora would drive into Tim Hortons on the corner – a challenge for anyone.

Dad and Aunt Marie loved skating and Mom & Dad loved dancing and on a Saturday night they would meet up with special friends including Bill and Ruby Smith. Dad passed away in January, 2005. Clint & Mary had been married for 67 years.

And so, to summarize the story for now. Carolyn left Stayner after school (C.D.C.I.), moved to Barrie and joined Bell Canada. Later, she worked with the Ontario Government. She has been in Barrie ever since. She married Henry (Hank) Muir in 1964. They raised two children, Trudy & Barton who provided Carolyn & Hank with 2 grand daughters each, all of whom live in Georgetown. Lois (White) and I attended C.D.C.I., went to Toronto to complete our schooling, married in 1965 and worked in Toronto until 1999 when we retired to just south of Glen Huron in what was originally the Glen Huron Orange Lodge hall (moved from Glen Huron in 1974). We have two children, Erinn who lives in the United States with her husband and 3 children and John (Jac) who is not married and living in Toronto.

Our son Jac, who was born in 1976, is named after my brother Jackie who was tragically killed in 1975 while working with Ontario Hydro on Hwy.#26 near Edenvale. Jackie had lived in Stayner with his wife Linda (Kerluke).

Connie married Adrian Verstegen (owner of Jerry's Body Shop) in Stayner the same year that Jackie died. They live on Warrenton Rd. Their two sons Adam & Mark both live & work in the area; Mark in Stayner with his wife Laura, and Adam in Creemore with his wife Jazmin & their two children. Mark works with his father and Adam owns a cabinet making business. Connie & Adrian had previously built their own home on Sunnidale St. on a lot that Grandpa Jim Cauthers owned and used for a vegetable garden.

It was a good feeling putting this information together. It may not be 100% accurate, but for the most part tells the story. Thank you and if anyone has a Cauthers story that they would like to pass along, please email glcauthers@rogers.com

Gary Cauthers 2019